GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:62
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2005
CLASSICAL STATUS TO SOME LANGUAGES
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Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has accorded classical language status to some languages recently;

(b) if so, the languages that have been given such status;

(c) the criteria under which such recognition has been given;

(d) the name of the authority that has decided to grant such status; and

(e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to develop such languages?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL)

(a)to(d): Yes, Sir. Tamil has been accorded Classical Language status by the Government of India. The following criteria has been laid down for according classical status to a language:-

(i) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a thousand years.

(ii) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.

(iii) The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.

(iv) The Classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

(e): The Government is taking the following steps for development of such languages:-

(i) Two major International awards for scholars of eminence in Classical Indian languages.

(ii) Establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Language.

(iii) University Grants Commission is being requested to create, starting with the Central Universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs for Classical Languages for scholars of eminence.